

Weekly Situation Report
Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS)
April 1, 2003
From: Billy Causey

HOT TOPICS AND HEADS UP:

Billy Causey is in Tallahassee participating in a South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force Meeting on Tuesday and Wednesday. Along with Michael Weiss, Billy will participate in a FKNMS Water Quality Protection Program Steering Committee Meeting scheduled for April 3rd in Marathon. Agenda topics include status and trends reports on water quality, seagrass and coral health, and progress reports from local agencies on implementation of water quality improvements.

Alicia Stevenson, Florida Keys Aquatic Preserve Manager, joined Sean Meehan and Kevin Kirsch of the NOAA Damage Assessment Center in the first seagrass restoration project of the "Mini 312" vessel grounding program. The three planted bird stakes and Cuban shoalgrass plugs on Knights Key Bank, the site of the N'CONTROL boat grounding. Funds collected from the boat grounding paid for the restoration and followup monitoring.

Sanctuary Team members Anne McCarthy, Russell Reardon, Cheva Heck, John Dotten and Ben Richards salvaged thirty hard and soft corals at American Shoal Light on March 26th. Later in the day, divers from The Nature Conservancy relocated 22 long spined sea urchins. The corals and urchins were in danger of being crushed from work on the light structure.

Alex Score attended the Miami Dade Community College Environmental Science and Community Outreach Project (ESCOP) Organization and Coordination meeting on March 27. The ESCOP is a grant from the South Florida Water Management District for CERP (Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan) outreach which are granted to county community colleges.

Alex Score attended the March 28 OEEECT meeting. The OEEECT is the Outreach, Environmental, and Economic Equity Coordination Team that is tasked to develop a strategy for consideration by the South Florida Restoration Task Force Working Group. During the meeting, the group reviewed the draft strategy which identifies gaps where additional environmental justice and outreach initiative are needed.

LCDR Dave Score was interviewed by National Geographic on March 31 as part of a documentary being developed for the archeological shipwreck investigation of the Queen of Nassau. A National Geographic film crew has been participating with Monitor

Archeologist, Tane Casserly, and a team from NURC/UNCW in a series of technical dives to the site to complete the documentation and assessment of this historic shipwreck within FKNMS.

LCDR Dave Score and volunteers from the Submerged Resource Inventory team will be meeting with Biscayne National Park Archeologist, Brenda Lanzendorf, to discuss joint projects on Submerged Cultural Resources involving volunteers on April 1.

This week, Science Coordinator Brian Keller is attending the Georgia Basin/Puget Sound Research Conference in Vancouver. He will give a talk about designing, implementing, and monitoring fully protected zones in the FKNMS and lead a discussion arranged by The Nature Conservancy.

June Cradick will be in Lafayette, Louisiana this week meeting with the architects and engineers for the Dr. Nancy Foster Florida Keys Environmental Center.

COMMUNITY EVENTS:

Several FKNMS Team Members supported the FKNMS booth at the Marathon Seafood Festival, a well-attended event.

Robert Keeley and John Nazzaro trained seven new Team OCEAN volunteers in Key West.

Robert Keeley attended the Key West Propeller Club. The Club is looking to acquire the U.S.S. Trout, a Cold War era submarine mothballed in Key West.

John Nazzaro presented at a USCG Auxilliary boating safety class.

CONGRESSIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Nothing to report.

PRESS – MEDIA ISSUES:

Sean Meehan and Kevin Kirsch of NOAA's Damage Assessment Center were guests on Capt. Ken Harris's talk show on WFFG 1300 am, on Wednesday, March 26th.

"\$1 million windfall still out of reach of local eco groups," Solares Hill (Key West weekly), Friday, March 28, 2003, regarding Sanctuary Friends receipt of \$1 million donation from cruise ship settlement last year. Sanctuary Friends is working on a response.

"Loophole allows boat race in Keys sanctuary," The Key West Citizen, Saturday, March 29, 2003, regarding flats guides planned protests of rumored boat races in the backcountry near Marvin Key.

Cheva Heck discussed Water Quality Steering Committee and Sanctuary Advisory Council meeting agendas on US 1 Radio's "Morning Magazine," Monday, March 31st

Cheva Heck spoke with Newport News Daily Press reporter regarding military ships as artificial reefs, Monday, March 31st, 2003.

Cheva Heck continued working with NOAA Fisheries Marine Mammal Stranding Network staff on strategies for improving media coverage. We will be meeting with reporters in the Upper Keys on Wednesday, April 2nd.

Cheva Heck continued to work on arranging coverage for the Queen of Nassau surveys. Rodale's and Florida Scuba News will be covering it, and we will be covering it for Waterways.

Cheva Heck working on pitch letter for a TV show called "Let's Go Diving," which plans to film in the Keys this summer.